

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Institute for Adult Learning launches first-of-its-kind Collaboratory to co-create innovative solutions for adult learning

- *Unveiled at IAL's inaugural Adult Learning Xchange 2024, the Collaboratory model seeks to bring together different stakeholders to pioneer new approaches to Singapore's adult education*
- *ALX 2024 saw over 450 industry experts, professionals and participants gather to delve into the latest in adult learning and innovations*

SINGAPORE – 19 JANUARY 2024 – The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) has launched Singapore's first Adult Learning Collaboratory (ALC) to resolve critical challenges in Singapore's adult education landscape. This initiative was announced by Guest-of-Honour Minister for Education, Mr Chan Chun Sing, at IAL's Adult Learning Xchange (ALX) 2024. ALX is a SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG)-supported event since 2008 that seeks to foster dialogue and sharing, as well as collective exploration of new frontiers in adult learning.

2 The ALC, supported by SSG, aims to collaborate with 40 partners to address key challenges in adult learning through the development of innovative approaches that are based on industry insights and research evidence. ALC partners will leverage IAL's body of research and engage in a dynamic process of testing, experimentation, and iteration to refine solutions for real-world settings. Through its network of stakeholders, the Collaboratory also seeks to promote wider adoption of new approaches that have been proven to work well across the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector and enterprises to benefit more Singaporeans.

3 As a start, the ALC will focus on seeking innovative solutions to address these three challenges: (1) digital capability development for mature workers; (2) enabling employees to be co-pilots in enterprise transformation; and (3) integrating future-oriented pedagogies within the TAE sector. For more information on the three projects, please refer to the [Annex A](#).

4 Associate Professor Yeo Li Pheow, Executive Director of IAL, said, "As MOE-designated National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning (NCAL), IAL is dedicated to advancing our training and adult education landscape. The ALC epitomises this commitment, uniquely positioned with its user-centric approach to unite societal contributors. Together, we will be delving into the different challenges that each collaborator faces, devising research-informed solutions that will be tailored to address specific evolving challenges across various sectors in Singapore and hold the potential to influence global social issues. The ALC propels us to innovate on complex issues and achieve outcomes that meet the needs of diverse stakeholders while tapping closely into their expertise."

5 A 3,500-square-foot physical facility for the ALC will be established in the Lifelong Learning Institute in the second half of 2024. The facility will serve as a space for demonstrations, showcases, and local and international engagements in adult learning.

6 Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chief Executive of SSG and Chairman of IAL Council, said, "The Forward Singapore report highlights that we will invest more as a nation to support mid-career

Singaporeans in their upskilling. It is vital that we support this thrust by continually refreshing and updating our approaches to adult learning to provide Singaporeans with meaningful, effective learning experiences. It is thus timely to launch this Collaboratory, to bring together the best ideas; experiment together to turn them from theory into practice; and work together to proliferate such approaches to achieve impact.”

7 Mr Jason Zhang, Managing Director at Luce SG and a partner involved in the first and second challenges, said, “Luce SG looks forward to participating as a pioneer member of the ALC to innovate in a data-driven and experimental way with the ecosystem. Accessing new ideas and capabilities is crucial to anchor Luce SG on strong fundamentals to deliver robust business, workforce and social outcomes in the current and future.”

8 Ms Tan Yen Yen, Senior Director of Business and the Creatives at Singapore Polytechnic and a partner involved in the second challenge, said, “Singapore Polytechnic is honoured to be a pioneer within the ALC. Facilitating businesses in unlocking the full potential of their workforce is pivotal to guarantee that educational programmes and training initiatives have a lasting impact on learners, enterprises, and society. Through our strategic alliance with the ALC, we aspire to actively contribute to and elevate Singapore’s training and adult education standards.”

9 Ms Praise Mok, Deputy Chief Executive of ROHEI Corporation and a partner involved in the third challenge, said, “ROHEI is excited to collaborate and innovate to nurture a thriving, future-fit TAE sector with our partners, a sector that is anchored by sound pedagogies and evidence-driven practices that add value for all in the ecosystem.”

10 SSG and IAL would like to invite enterprises, organisations and researchers keen to advance the practice of training and adult education in Singapore to engage with us via the Collaboratory. Those interested may visit www.ial.edu.sg/alc or email alc@ial.edu.sg for more details.

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About the Institute for Adult Learning:

The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is an autonomous institute of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. As the National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning, IAL works closely and supports Adult Education professionals, businesses, human resource developers and policymakers through its comprehensive suite of programmes and services on raising capabilities and catalysing innovations in Continuing Education and Training (CET). IAL also champions research sustaining economic performance through skills, shaping employment and CET decisions, and developing innovations through learning technology and pedagogy to heighten adult learning. For more information, visit www.ial.edu.sg.

About SkillsFuture Singapore

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and strengthens the ecosystem of training and adult education in Singapore. Through a holistic suite of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG also works with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training that meet the demands of different sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce. For more information, visit www.ssg.gov.sg.

Annex A

Upcoming Projects for the Adult Learning Collaboratory

(i) Digital capability development for mature workers

The “Digital Capability Development for Mature Workers” project will bring the ecosystem together to jointly look at how mature age learners can respond meaningfully to disruptions that AI technologies may bring to their professional lives. The focus is on their role as steerers of technologies rather than passive recipients. Assembling a team of experts, this project will draw on the science of adult learning in areas that mature learners are strong at to support how they can confidently evolve their occupational practice in an age of AI. The full ecosystem will be involved - enterprises, training providers, adult educators – to co-create the pedagogies and support structures for an augmented transition. The project will broker opportunities for all workforce segments, including those in jobs without high demand for digital skills. This may entail working through their employers to design digital projects that sufficiently allow mature workers to experiment with digital tools at work. Data will be collected to show mature-age learners' contributions to their workplace with their new digital skills.

The overarching goal is to enable mature workers to navigate the digital age confidently as productive contributors.

Collaborators: Mature-age learners, enterprises, education and training providers, adult educators, edtech players, researchers, policymakers

(ii) Enabling employees to be co-pilots in enterprise transformation

The “Enabling employees as co-pilots in enterprise transformation” project aims to re-energise workplaces by engaging the entire workforce in enterprise transformation efforts. It targets leaders interested in rejuvenating their businesses through bottom-up innovation. It builds on IAL’s research findings that the specific coupling of high-value-added business strategies and inclusive people strategies leads to firms reporting the best business outcomes in Singapore. The focus is on the approaches that enterprises can take to activate their workforce to grow the business in new ways while demanding higher skills, thereby growing the pipeline of strong businesses and quality jobs in the economy. Often, this requires the workforce to develop emergent capabilities not immediately available in the company. For instance, employees may be galvanised to develop entirely new product lines not previously offered by the firm – supported by a mix of training programmes, coaching by start-up consultants, and workplace learning. Additionally, enterprises may be introduced to new management practices that increase not just skills but also workforce autonomy to allow them to unlock the full value of their workforce. Data will be collected to show the impact of bottom-up innovation on business outcomes and skills demand.

Collaborators: Enterprise leaders and their workforce, consultants (business, technology, HR and L&D), education and training providers, adult educators, researchers, policymakers

(iii) Integrating future-oriented pedagogies within the TAE sector

The “Integrating future-oriented pedagogies within the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector” project focuses on a critical shift in TAE pedagogies to be future-fit and adapt to the evolving complexities of the workforce. The impetus for this project stems from IAL’s research findings that predominant practices in the TAE sector tend to be less effective at nurturing adult learners’ adaptability and comfort in handling emergent, unknown or complex situations at the workplace. In this ALC project, the full capacity of the TAE ecosystem will be harnessed to support learning that is emergent, complex and generative. Ecosystem players will be engaged in extensive co-creation and experimentation to develop the pedagogies, tools and resources to be deployed in a wide range of settings such as workplaces, training programmes and edtech tools. Interventions and experiments will be conducted to test out ideas and check the efficacy of the solutions. The focus is not only on the learners, but also the capacity of the TAE enablers – be it adult educators, training providers, enterprises, edtech players and more – to evolve their practices towards making their product and service offerings fit for purpose for the growing complexity of work.

Collaborators: Education and training providers, adult educators, edtech players, enterprises, industry bodies, researchers, policymakers